of US $ 0.59 billion of bilateral loans has already been prepaid in the current financial year so far.

Conference on VAT system

712. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Finance Ministers' Conference was held in New Delhi in third week of October, 2003 to sort out the issue of implementation of Value Added Tax system in different States;

(b) if so, what decisions were taken to implement the system; and

(c) what specific benefits and advantages are likely to accrue there from to the consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) to (c) A meeting of Empowered Committee of State Finance Ministers was held on 20th October, 2003. The decision taken in the meeting include recommendations pertaining to amendments to the CST Act., 1956, implementation of uniform sales tax floor rate regime, matter relating to levy of sales tax/VAT on goods covered under Additional Duties of Excise Act, 1957, installation of Tax Information Exchange System, imposition of Sales Tax/VAT on items sold through Canteen Stores Department etc. The decisions taken by the Empowered Committee are likely to improve the revenue position of the States and would lead to an overall benefit for the consumers.

Special Credit Scheme for Women

713. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that though certain Public Sector Banks have drawn out specific schemes for extending finance to women, they do not generate information regarding credit provided to women by each of these Banks;

(b) if so, the details of schemes, Bank-wise and reasons for not generating data in that regard; and

(c) if answer to (a) be in the negative what are the details of credit provided by each Bank to women under various schemes during the last three years, year-wise, Bank-wise and State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The details of the schemes and the credit provided by certain Public Sector Banks during the last three years of women entrepreneurs are indicated in the Statement annexed.

Statement

Details of credit provided by each Bank to women under various schemes during the last three years

(Rs. in crores)

Sl. No	Name of Bank	Name of Scheme	Credit 200001	Credit 200102	Credit 200203
1.	S.B.I.	Stree Shakti	1342.12	2093.19	2932.52
2.	P&S Bank	Udyogini	NIL	20 52	19.39
3.	Syndicate Bank	—	372.04	507.63	686.74
4.	Bank of Maharashtra	Gramin Mahilava balak Vikas Mandal	Nil	Nil	123.64
5.	Central Bank of India	Cent Kalyani	126.40	233.09	582.19
6.	Bank of India	Priyadarshini Yojana	666.22	731.18	909.93
7.	Bank of Baroda	Akshay Mahila Arthik Sahay Yojana	724.79	822.06	1045.29
8.	Indian Bank	Gramin Mahila Sowbhagya scheme	Nil	35.89	31.49
9.	Corporation Bank	Corp Mahila Gold Scheme	Nil	Nil	0.35
10.	Dena Bank	Dena Shakti	Nil	Nil	1.67
11.	UCO Bank	UCO Nari Shakthi	Nil	214.93	410.17
12.	United Bank of India	—	139.23	189.52	277.92

Changes in exchange control norms

714. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pieased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have asked Reserve Bank of India to introduce changes in exchange control norms to enable Indian companies and individuals to acquire technology and R&D assets abroad;

(b) if so, details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether there will be any change in the existing ceilings on royalty payments; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?